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The War Paper for Women

VOTES FOR WOMEN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

VOL. IX. (Fourth Series) No. 424. FEBRUARY, 1917. Price 1d. Monthly (Post Free 1½d.)

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DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK

The Report of the Speaker's Conference will not be published until after this issue appears, and will probably be presented to Parliament as soon as it reassembles on February 7. With the forecasts of the Report that have found their way into the Press we deal in our leading article. One good result of the premature pessimism expressed in some of the earlier of these was the instant appeal made by many newspapers for a generous treatment of the whole question. If that attitude is endorsed by a packed attendance at the meeting organized by the National Council for Adult Suffrage in the Kingsway Hall on February 10, the hands of the new Prime Minister will be considerably strengthened with regard to the step we sincerely hope he contemplates taking in the direction of franchise reform. For, even if the more hopeful prediction of the *Daily News* be true, and the Speaker's Conference will report favourably (though not definitely) on woman suffrage, the Government's opportunity and the Government's duty are no less clear and insistent.

The Adult Suffrage Movement

Mr. Lloyd George will have plenty of support for the widest measure of franchise reform he cares to devise. The demand for complete womanhood and manhood suffrage is urged by the most live section of the progressive movement at the present time. The National Council for Adult Suffrage already numbers among its members many of the most distinguished men and women of the day, and among its constituent societies many of the most important men's and women's organizations in the country. Apart from the resolutions that are being passed all over the country in favour of adult suffrage (the N.C.A.S. sent in some 167 of these to the Speaker's Conference last month), the whole weight of the Labour Party Conference, proceeding as these lines are written, is being thrown on the side of a demand for electoral reform on these broad lines. The annual conference of the Women's Labour League, held at Salford on January 22, unanimously made the same demand, Miss Mary Macarthur saying with trenchant irony—"Votes were denied to the mothers of men. I think they will be given to the makers of infernal machine-guns." But if womanhood suffrage is granted, both mothers and munitioneers will get the vote simply because they are human beings. The London Labour Council for Adult Suffrage holds an Electoral Conference in Holborn Hall on February 17, the agenda of which is admirably comprehensive.

Women and War Risks

The terrible explosion in East London forms a grim comment on Mr. Lloyd George's praise of women munitioneers, in his speech on the new War Loan, on January 11. He said:

> A man who has been Munitions Minister for twelve months must feel a debt of gratitude to the women for what they have done. They have helped to win, and without them we could not have done it.

Men and women alike were victims of the disaster on January 19, and alike showed heroism and self-sacrifice in the hour of crisis. But it is well to remember that, as one daily paper pointed out, in peace the disaster could not have happened, for it is only the war that has brought the manufacture of explosives into the precincts of towns. And the women, who are praised for their share in winning the war, who are asked to come forward and expose themselves still further to these risks, have no voice in government or foreign policy, no power over the great decisions of peace and war. We believe that the Prime Minister realises this, and we look to him to prove it when Parliament meets.

Women and the Bar

At the annual general meeting of the Bar on January 18th, Mr. Holford Knight proposed that women should in future be eligible as members. Mr. Knight, a recent and conspicuous convert to Woman Suffrage, made the same proposal two or three years ago, and, as at that time, it was again negatived on this occasion by a considerable majority. The Attorney General, who presided, admitted that the experience of the war had modified many prepossessions and prejudices with regard to the position of women, but urged the absence of many barristers on service as a reason for rejecting the resolution. The real reason, however, was simply the selfishness of a close corporation. Barristers and solicitors alike dread the admission of women—because they might prove dangerous competitors and absorb some of the work which now falls to themselves. As the *Manchester Guardian* says:—

> The only valid argument against their admission is that the women, or a few of them, would be so good that they would diminish the amount of work available for the men, and the members of the Bar, being good trade unionists, rejected the resolution solely on that account.

Even the *Times*, on the day before the meeting, declared, "We should rejoice, on the broadest grounds, to see these artificial barriers removed." Yet male professional exclusiveness triumphed once again.

Luxury and Wages

It is one of the popular illusions that women are now making enormous wages, which they lavish on fur coats and drink. Of course, as the demand for women's labour is so vast, a large number of them are making more than before, but there is a terrible reverse side to the imagined picture. Miss Mary Macarthur, who never speaks on women's wages without authority, tells us that 100,000 women working on munitions of various kinds are not given a living wage. She quotes instances of girls of eighteen who get only 2d. an hour in Southampton, with a possible rise to 2¾d. at the end of a year's work: also of women who are working in the Potteries for 9s. or 10s. a week. It must be remembered, first, that the cost of living has gone up 60 per cent. since the war, and, secondly, that all these women come under the "leaving clauses" of the Munitions Act, and cannot give up the work without the leaving certificate, which is usually refused. Meantime, the Government advertises for 8,000 more women for filling factories, and promises wages of 27s. for a week of 54 hours by day or night. This is 6d. an hour—the minimum of what pay ought to be, even in peace time. We hear that hundreds more women typists are required in the new Government offices, but the offered pay is only 25s. to 30s. a week, whereas in the open market typists are making 35s. to 50s. The Government's scheme of general service does not include the conscription of women, and, indeed, the conscription of people who are not allowed to rank as citizens would be an intolerable injustice. Let them give a fair and living wage at the market rate, and the voluntary system will work all right.

The Teachers, Also

The grievance of munition workers, we may hope, is only temporary. It continues only "for the duration." But another large class of public servants have been raising a just demand for more consideration and better pay. This is the teacher class, whose service is permanent in peace and war, and on whom the lasting welfare of the country so largely depends. We notice that at a meeting of the National Union of Teachers in Birmingham, representing 40,000 out of the 92,000 members, the chairman, Mr. H. R. Morrell, of York, declared that, unless there was an improvement in the teachers' salaries the educational system of the country would collapse. With a view to influencing the Government, the meeting called upon the Executive to seek affiliation with the national and local Labour organisations. For such a body as the N.U.T., this sounds to many an extreme step, and the *Times* urges them rather to extend the recently instituted Teachers' Registration Council. No doubt, the N.U.T. will judge for itself how best to bring the influence of its great numbers to bear. We would only venture to remind them that one way would be to secure the franchise for its women members, and we would recall the comment of the *Christian Commonwealth* that "the N.U.T. would greatly strengthen its position if it insisted that both men and women teachers are entitled to equal pay."

Military Honours for Women

Of course we agree with Lady Frances Balfour, and all other rational people, that women should receive decorations for service in war, when they have won them as deservedly as men. It is ludicrous that women who have done service in camps and hospitals, upon terrible retreats and in epidemics of loathsome plagues, should be debarred from the Military Cross or D.S.O., which men who had done the same would undoubtedly have received. It is ludicrous and even shameful that almost the only decorations bestowed upon Englishwomen in this war should have been the award of France or Belgium or Russia. But if that were the only unjust deprivation which women suffered; we should bear it without serious complaint. It is far more ludicrous and shameful that they should be still deprived of the most elementary rights of citizenship and economic or social equality. We respect a title or medal given for service or persistent courage, but by the political right to self-government more permanent honour and respect for all women are secured.

The Cost of Living

It is good news that the separation allowances have at last been increased to meet, in some degree, the rise in the cost of living. According to the latest Board of Trade figures the price of food-stuffs alone stands to-day 87 per cent. higher than in July, 1914. We can imagine what this means to the poor, who spend the greater part of their incomes on food, and to babies, for whom milk at prohibitive prices cannot be provided. In the latest report of the principal Medical Officer to the Local Government Board, it was stated that, in 1915, 98,477 infants died in England and Wales in the first year after birth, and 55,607 died between the ages of one and five. The war is handicapping the race in every kind of way. The pick of the nation are being killed and disabled, leaving only the less fit to be the fathers of the next generation; the mothers are being rendered unfit by emotional strain, by overwork, and by the continued rise of prices:—and the children suffer through them. It is always the children who are the first and the last casualties in a war. Yet the women who bear them have no voice in making or marring the policy that leads to war.

Progress in Social Hygiene

An Interim Report of the activities of the N.C.C.V.D. (Kingsway House, Kingsway, W.C.) has been issued at an opportune moment, when new treatment centres in Greater London and many counties throughout the country are being opened.

The following clause in the Report is of particular interest to women:—

> A special problem which has occupied the attention of the Council has been that of hospital accommodation for pregnant women suffering from venereal disease. Enquiries at the principal London lying-in hospitals showed that they did not willingly receive such cases, and that therefore married women who happened to be innocent sufferers from venereal disease were compelled to enter Poor Law infirmaries if they needed institutional treatment for pregnancy. Accordingly the Council arranged a conference with representatives of the Medical Boards of these hospitals, to whom the desirability of providing accommodation for such cases was pointed out. As a result there is good reason for hoping that before long it will be possible for respectable women to be received into these hospitals instead of having to enter the Poor Law institutions.

Items of Interest

Major H. J. Gillespie, R.F.A., Hon. Treasurer of the United Suffragists, has been awarded the D.S.O.

The Women's Volunteer Ambulance Reserve ("Zeppelin women," as they have been called since their admirable work during the raid on London in September, 1915) rendered signal service on the occasion of the explosion on January 19.

A monthly report of the Women's Legion (now supplying women military motor drivers in some 30 centres) runs as follows:—

> Complaints.—There have been no complaints. Sickness.—There has been no sickness. Accidents.—There have been no accidents.

Women police have been introduced into the Enfield Small Arms Factory, and the Royal Gunpowder Factory, Waltham Abbey. St. Pancras Board of Guardians have joined the Paddington Guardians in urging the inclusion of women in the Metropolitan Police Force.

A woman has been placed in charge of the electric lighting station at Bradchurch, Exeter.

Lord Desborough stated at a meeting of the Thames Conservancy Board that women had been appointed as lock-keepers and were giving the utmost satisfaction.

Women are now to be employed as conductors on the Tube railways.

Several speakers, including Sir James Crichton-Browne and Professor Glaister, emphasized the need for the State registration of nurses at a meeting held in London to promote the amalgamation of the College of Nursing with the Royal British Nursing Association.

A recent official return shows that, on October 16 last, the number of children of school age, exempted for agricultural employment, amounted to 13,823 boys, and 1,092 girls.

Dr. Newsholme, in his report for 1915-16, urges the increased need for saving child life, as shown in the lower natural increase of the population in 1915.

Mr. Kingsley Wood, L.C.C., cited in a recent speech the case of the wife of a munition maker who had six children; and 52 landlords in London had refused to let her a flat, house, or rooms on account of her family.

Dr. John Robertson, M.O.H. for Birmingham, said at a meeting on January 23 that the conduct of landlords towards tenants with large families was driving many respectable artisans into slum districts.

Owing to the absence of choir men with the colours Harrow Parish Church is about to form a women's choir.

An Army nurse (Mrs. Ruth Bagley) who has just died in Staffordshire, served through the South African War, and was invalided home from Mons in 1914, having been wounded in one foot and both arms when tending the wounded under fire.

Miss Jackson, aged 19, has defeated Mr. Wilkinson, aged 51, in a ploughing match at Wainfleet, Lincolnshire.

MR. WILLIAM DE MORGAN

Novelist and Suffragist

The much regretted death of the distinguished novelist, Mr. William De Morgan, removes a sound Suffragist from the list of Vice-Presidents of the U.S. Many readers of VOTES FOR WOMEN will doubtless remember the letter, reprinted in that paper in June, 1912, written by Mr. De Morgan and sent by him with an enclosure of £50 to the Women's Social and Political Union. In it he said: "My own sympathies are unreserved and absolute in respect of women's claim to the franchise, if only on the ground of expediency that a higher standard of honour and veracity is needed in public matters, which women would supply."

On the formation of the United Suffragists, in February, 1914, Mr. William De Morgan consented to become a Vice-President of that Society. It is therefore as a Suffragist, who always had the courage of his opinions, that United Suffragists will chiefly remember one whose name also ranks high among those of popular English novelists.

GREAT SUFFRAGE MEETING

Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C., on Saturday Afternoon, February 10, at 3 p.m.

HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR TICKETS?

We deal in other parts of the paper with the interesting, and at the same time critical, position of the Suffrage movement. Knowing that our readers will be keen to know in what way they can help to bring about a successful Suffrage issue in the immediate future, we call upon them unhesitatingly to

Come to the Kingsway Hall on February 10 at 3 p.m.!

Nothing will strengthen the hands of those who are trying to get the Suffrage question settled *now* more than a packed public meeting, to demand the full enfranchisement of every man and woman in the country. Parliament will have reassembled three days before; the long expected Report of the Speakers' Conference will either have been presented, or will be on the point of being presented to the House. It is the exact psychological moment for a strong expression of public opinion, giving a lead to the Government as to the feeling of the country with regard to the settlement of the Franchise question.

THE SPEAKERS

The speakers will be representative of almost every school of Suffrage thought. The Bishop of Lincoln (Chair) is well known as one of the strongest supporters in the Church of women's enfranchisement. Sir John Simon's speech will have great weight at such a moment, not only because he is a firm believer in a national franchise, but also because, as a member of the Speaker's Conference, he may by that time be in a position to discuss the findings of that body. Mr. W. C. Anderson, M.P., has championed the cause of the woman worker in the House ever since war broke out. and his speech will have the greater claim upon the sympathies of Suffragists on that account.

Councillor Margaret Ashton needs no words of ours to indicate why she will be one of the speakers on February 10. Her advocacy of a democratic basis for the franchise and her work for women workers during the war are equally well known. Miss Mary Macarthur. who has done so much for women's trade unions, and Mrs. Barton, a member of the Women's Co-operative Guild and a working woman herself, complete a notable list of speakers for what promises to be a notable meeting.

THE AUDIENCE

Among the audience and on the platform will be representatives of all the Societies affiliated to the National Council for Adult Suffrage, as well as members of the Council and other distinguished persons. Among those who have accepted an invitation to be present are Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., Mr. William Archer, Sir William and Lady Byles. Mr. W. H. Dickinson, M.P., Archdeacon Escreet, Mr. J. A. Hobson, Mr. George Lansbury, Miss Susan Lawrence, L.C.C.. Mrs. Walter Rea, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Trevelyan, Mrs. Olive Schreiner, Mr. Appleton, Mr. F. Bramley, Councillor Ben Turner, Mr. Robert Williams.

TICKETS

The prices of the seats are as follows:—Reserved and numbered, 2s. 6d.; reserved but unnumbered, 1s. and 3d. (Those at 1s. and 3d. will not be reserved after 3.10 p.m.) They should be written for at once to the Ticket Secretary, United Suffragists, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

The meeting is held under the auspices of the National Council for Adult Suffrage, to which the United Suffragists (who have made themselves responsible for a large number of seats) are affiliated. Handbills and further particulars may be had on application to Mrs. Ayrton Gould, Hon. Organiser of the Meeting, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

Get your Tickets Now!

U.S. COUNCIL MEETING

The second annual Council meeting of the United Suffragists was held on Saturday afternoon, January 20, in one of the Committee rooms at the Central Hall, Westminster. Mr. Henry W. Nevinson was elected to the Chair, and the following members of the Executive were present:—Mrs. Ayrton Gould, Miss Brewster, Mr. Gerald Gould, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Mrs. Ben Webster, Mrs. Elaine Whelen. Twenty-six delegates were present, representing the National Branch of the U.S. and the Ashford, Birmingham, Hampstead and Golder's Green, Letchworth, Manchester, and Portsmouth Branches.

Election of New Committee:—The Hon. Secretary, Miss Brewster, announced that as no further nominations had been put forward, the two candidates proposed by the Executive, Mr. Laurence Housman and Mr. George Lansbury, to fill the vacancies caused by the retirement of Mr. John Scurr and Mr. Charles Gray, therefore stood elected. (The composition of the new Committee is as follows:—Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Miss Brewster, Mr. Albert Dawson, Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O., R.F.A., Mr. Gerald Gould, Mrs. Ayrton Gould, Mr. Laurence Housman, Mr. George Lansbury, Mr. H. W. Nevinson, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Mrs. Ben Webster, Mrs. Elaine Whelen.)

Annual Report:—The Annual Report was read by Miss Brewster and adopted unanimously.

Financial Statement:—The financial statement was read by Mrs. Ayrton Gould, and adopted unanimously subject to endorsement by the auditors.

Alteration of Constitution:—Some alterations of wording, proposed by the Executive as a result of the change in the Suffrage demand of the U.S., were adopted unanimously. There was some discussion over the first of these, which was to the following effect:—

> That for the present wording of the "Object" the following be substituted:—"To secure a Government measure to remove existing electoral anomalies and give votes to all women and all men."

In the course of the discussion (which centred merely round verbal points) on this motion, Mr. J. Marsh (Ashford) made a stirring speech, saying how much the change of demand had been welcomed by the large numbers of working-men for whom he spoke.

A slight discussion took place on the proposed insertion of a clause, requiring the Branch Secretary "to furnish Headquarters with the names and addresses of Branch members for reference purposes." The amendment proposed by the Hampstead and Golder's Green U.S., to add the word "only" to this clause, was withdrawn by them after discussion, and the alteration was passed unanimously. Further alterations in the Membership Card, being mainly consequential proposals, were adopted without discussion.

Vote of Confidence:—The following resolution, a vote of confidence which also empowered the Executive to deal with critical situations as they arose, was proposed by the Bolton U.S., seconded by the Manchester U.S., and passed unanimously:—

> That in view of the abnormal conditions of war time and the critical political situation, the Executive Committee be empowered to modify, if necessary, the policy laid down by the last Council meeting, in the event of its being impossible to call a Council meeting in time to deal with any political crisis that may arise during the year.

Political Situation and Future Campaign:—Most of the delegates took part in the discussion that followed on the political situation and the future campaign of the U.S. in town and country. Among those who spoke were Miss Pym (Letchworth), Mrs. Poole (Portsmouth), Mrs. Sadd Brown, and Miss Newcomb (Hampstead and G. Green), Miss Hampson (Manchester), Mrs. P. Brewster (Birmingham), and, for the National Branch, Mr. H. Baillie Weaver, Miss Somers, Miss Phillips, Mr. P. C. Darby, Mr. Gould, Mr. Flewker, and others. No further resolution was passed, and the Council Meeting broke up at 5.30.

A TAX RESISTER

It was reported in the *Times* (January 4) that Dr. Winifred Patch was adjudged bankrupt by the statutory first meeting of creditors, who met at Bankruptcy Buildings under the receiving order obtained against her by the Attorney-General. The Assistant Official Receiver admitted that the only proof of debt was that of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue for Income Tax, amounting to £50 16s. 6d. It was stated that in her preliminary examination Dr. Patch had declined as an unenfranchised woman to state the amount of her professional income, because she contended it was contrary to the Constitution that there should be taxation apart from representation.

What Suffragists Can Do

Dr. Patch's protest, made at great personal inconvenience and cost, will be supported by all those who really believe that "Taxation without Representation is Tyranny." A simple way of showing this moral support will be by their presence in Bankruptcy Buildings, Carey Street (behind the Law Courts), on the occasion of Dr. Patch's public examination on Tuesday, February 6, at 11 o'clock. We hope that as many United Suffragists as possible will wear their Suffrage badges and attend the Court, not in any sense to obstruct the proceedings, but simply to show that Dr. Patch, in her plucky protest, has voteless women behind her.

Dr. Patch's Statement

The following letter was sent to the Press by Dr. Patch:—

> As the fact that a petition of bankruptcy has been filed against me may occasion a good deal of surprise and concern amongst a fairly large circle of people, may I be allowed to make public the fact that this action is taken, after four years, at the instance of the Inland Revenue authorities to recover income tax alleged to be due, which I, as an unenfranchised woman, dispute their right to claim.

CORRESPONDENCE

Equality at Hammersmith

To the Editors of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Editors,—The Hammersmith Borough Council, according to a report widely circulated in the Press at the beginning of January, are considering "a bold scheme for the moral cleansing of London." This naturally awakens our hopeful interest; but when, a little further down, we read that the Defence of the Realm Act has given Hammersmith "a golden opportunity" which will not be likely to recur, we cannot be very surprised to learn that the bold scheme concerns itself, not with any positive reform, but merely with the golden opportunity of sending a few more unfortunate persons of both sexes to prison.

Put briefly, the Hammersmith Borough Council proposes to establish sex equality entirely to its own satisfaction by visiting the same penalty upon the male frequenters of disorderly houses in the locality as is commonly visited upon the women with whom they associate; and this, we must in fairness admit, would be at least more equitable than the present custom of penalising the women only. But if the Hammersmith Borough Council imagines that the problem of prostitution and its attendant evils can be solved in this manner, or, indeed, that the proposal will have any effect beyond increasing the number of train and tram fares to the adjacent boroughs, I am afraid they will be disappointed. Not by penalties, fines, or imprisonment can that problem be solved in a country where for generations every presentable young woman has been carefully trained to work her personal charms for whatever they will fetch, in legitimate wedlock or out of it; where every effort of the more independent feminine spirits to achieve some alternative means of livelihood has been met—except in a temporary and quite abnormal period of national crisis—with a storm of fierce opposition and ridicule; and where the lawful satisfaction of natural instincts is deliberately hedged about with such a formidable thicket of difficulties and responsibilities that the man or woman who shirks it is not quite undeserving of our sympathy. Reform in this direction can only come through other reforms; and panic legislation is in every way to be deplored, not only because of its grotesque futility, once neatly pointed out by Shakespeare ("Measure for Measure," Act I. Scene 2), but because of the temptation to wash one's hands of all further responsibility once the police have got to work, and declare that if London is not "morally cleansed" by police measures, then the blame must be laid upon our share of original sin, against which it is hopeless to battle further.—Yours, &c.,

T. O'Meara.

THE CAMPAIGN

Monday, February 5; 7.30 p.m.—Open Meeting.—Corporation Chambers, Bolton. Speaker: The Rev. J. Ivory Cripps, on "Some National, Social and Racial Effects of the Great War."

Tuesday, February 6; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club, 92, Borough Road, Southwark. Speaker: Mrs. Elaine Whelen.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10; 3 p.m.—ADULT SUFFRAGE DEMONSTRATION.—KINGSWAY HALL, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C. (UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE N.C.A.S.). CHAIR: THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN. SPEAKERS: SIR JOHN SIMON, K.C., M.P., COUNCILLOR MARGARET ASHTON, MRS. BARTON, MISS MARY MACARTHUR, MR. W. C. ANDERSON, M.P.

Tickets and particulars to United Suffragists from Mrs. Ayrton Gould, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C. (See page 234).

Tuesday, February 13; 3.15 p.m.—Concert in aid of U.S. Club.—Leighton House, Kensington, W. Artistes: Miss Marjorie Hayward, Miss Alice Mandeville, Miss Irene Scharrer, Mr. Gervase Elwes, and Mr. F. B. Kiddle. (See below.)

Tuesday, February 13; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Miss Macnaghten on "Japan."

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16; 8 P.M.—OPEN MEETING.—SMALL ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND (TEMPLE STATION). CHAIR: MISS EVELYN SHARP ON "THE SUFFRAGE SITUATION." SPEAKER: MR. H. BAILLIE WEAVER ON "WOMEN AS COMRADES." ADMISSION FREE.

Monday, February 19; 7.30 p.m.—Members' Business Meeting. Bolton.

Tuesday, February 20; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

Tuesday, February 27; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club.

IN AID OF THE U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

A concert in aid of the Club funds will be given in Leighton House (kindly lent for the occasion) on Tuesday afternoon, February 13, at 3.15 p.m. The following well-known artistes are most generously giving their services: Miss Marjorie Hayward, Miss Alice Mandeville, Miss Irene Scharrer, Mr. Gervase Elwes, and Mr. F. B. Kiddle. Tickets (including tax), 10s. 6d., 7s. 6d., and 5s., to be obtained at Leighton House, or from the Concert Secretary, Glebe House, Glebe Place, Chelsea, S.W.

THE FUND

	£	s.	d.
Miss E. C. M. Allwork	0	5	0
Dr. L. Garrett Anderson	25	0	0
The Misses Barrowman	0	5	0
Miss E. M. Bingley	0	2	6
Miss A. C. Bell...	1	6	0
Miss Burke	0	8	0
Miss Dalgleish ...	0	2	6
The Misses Easton	0	7	6
Miss K. Ellison .	0	3	0
Miss Fox	0	10	0
Barbara & Gerald Gould	10	0	0
Mrs. Cobden Hirst	1	1	0
Per Miss Holden	1	17	0
Miss Hulme	0	5	0
Miss E. Marsh ...	1	0	0
Mrs. McCall	1	1	0
Miss J. Moore ...	0	2	6
Miss E. M. Coborne	0	10	0
The Misses Prier	2	0	0
Miss Putnam......	12	0	0
"Second".........	0	5	0
Miss A. Somers .	1	0	0
Miss E. Sharp ...	1	1	0
Miss J. Walton...	0	2	6
Mrs. Baillie Weaver	2	0	0
Mrs. Ben Webster	1	1	0
Miss Yarwood ...	0	2	0
The following have each sent one shilling for membership fees:—Mrs. and Miss Dale, Miss Hutchinson, Miss Jenkins, Miss Levy, Miss McDonald, Mrs. Millward, Miss Phillips, Miss Powell, Miss E. Slay, Mrs. Sweet, Miss West	0	12	0
Total	£64	9	6

CLUB FUND

	£	s.	d.
Miss E. Brown	0	5	0
Miss H. Brown	0	5	0
Miss Dale	0	1	0
Miss Dalgleish	0	3	0
Mrs. Ayrton Gould	0	5	0
Frau Jensen	0	10	0
Mrs. Jones	0	3	0
"Lloyd's Weekly News"	1	5	6
Mrs. E. M. Marston	1	0	0
Mrs. McCall	0	5	0
Mrs. McEwan...	1	0	0
Mrs. Silver	0	5	0
Mrs. Ben Webster...	1	5	0
Total	£6	12	6

Articles and News contributed for insertion in VOTES FOR WOMEN should be sent to The Editors, VOTES FOR WOMEN, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

Subscriptions to the paper should be sent to The Publisher, VOTES FOR WOMEN, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

The terms are (while a monthly issue), post free, 2s annual subscription, 1s. for six months, inside the United Kingdom; 2s. (½dol.) and 1s. (25 cents) abroad, payable in advance.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

27, CHANCERY LANE, W.C.

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Telephone:—Holborn 5880

FEBRUARY, 1917.

IS IT VICTORY AT LAST?

The Report of the Speaker's Conference takes its final form after we go to press, and we suppose it will not be published till presented to Parliament when the House of Commons reassembles on February 7, so that one cannot yet comment upon it with complete certainty. But the forecasts issued in various newspapers, though conflicting in one respect, are in all others so definite and so similar that we can hardly doubt there has been a "leakage" somewhere, and that, in spite of the official denial from the Press Bureau, the reports are fairly accurate in regard to many of the proposals.

More Votes for Men

The demand of the United Suffragists is for Adult Suffrage—the right of every grown-up man and woman in the country to share in self-government, so far as representation in Parliament can ensure it. In regard to franchise for men, the reported proposals of the Speaker's Conference mark a very considerable advance. "One man, one vote" (except that the graduate vote remains and an extra vote is left for one place of business); "one vote, one value" (by a general redistribution into equal constituencies); the reduction of the qualifying period from twelve months to six; the substitution of "residence" for "occupancy" (thus admitting all lodgers and men who have lived anywhere for six months on end); the inclusion of all soldiers and sailors while in the country, their service counting as "residence"; the holding of general elections everywhere on one and the same day; the reduction of election expenses, making the Returning Officers' fees a public charge; and the institution of proportional representation in some form—all these changes are on the line of progress and democracy. The *Westminster Gazette* calls them a revolution, though a "revolution by compromise." It protests that it uses the word "in no alarmist sense"; but evidently it is a little anxious, and the apprehension of that cautiously progressive organ proves that, in regard to the franchise for men, the Speaker's Conference has gone about as far as any mixed body of progressive and cautious politicians could be expected to go. Their proposals do not amount to manhood suffrage, though in practice they will come very near it. It may be that the Conference has deliberately avoided actual manhood suffrage in order to avoid the demand for complete womanhood suffrage which would then represent "equal terms with men."

Women—Another Story

The reports as to their behaviour in regard to the other and more urgent side of our demand vary somewhat. Some forecasts say they will omit woman suffrage altogether. Others that they will hand the question back to Parliament, possibly with a general recommendation. The Lobby Correspondent of the *Daily News* (January 23) contributed another and more hopeful rumour to the effect that a majority of the Conference were in favour of granting woman suffrage in some form, but had not yet arrived at an agreement on any definite scheme.

Whether in their Report they will be able to make a definite proposal, or will merely issue a general recommendation for the inclusion of women, will not be known, unfortunately, until after these words appear. But in either case we for our part shall look to the Government to take the matter into their own hands boldly, and frame a Bill to sweep away all electoral anomalies and give full franchise to every adult man and woman.

The Press Supports the Women

With regard to the gloomier forecasts that have appeared, the Press at least have indicated that they will not tolerate the idea that women can be excluded altogether from the Report. To quote again the organ of cautious progress—the *Westminster Gazette* declares:—

> The pledges which our public men have given to the women prevent a drastic change in the franchise which does not admit their claim.

The *Manchester Guardian*, equally level-headed, but always bolder in progress, maintains: "No great measure of electoral reform would be tolerable, or could be tolerated without it" (*i.e.*, woman suffrage). The *Nation* (January 20) said:—

> Everyone sees shipwreck for the resulting Bill if the women are shut out. It is impossible politically; economically, it would be an outrage.

Other papers which have the sense of democracy, whether Tory or Liberal, follow the same line. It is evident that, unless the Government takes this most urgent question into its own hands and calls upon Parliament to act with courage and generosity in reparation of a long injustice, the Speaker's Conference will have sat in vain, its time and deliberations will have been thrown away.

What the Government Can Do

If the Government will shake off the chilling trammels of prejudice and mere tradition, we are assured they will now receive the very general support, not only of the House of Commons, but of the country. The Speaker's Conference was specially appointed with a fairly equal balance of Suffragists and "Antis." We believe the Suffragists always had a certain majority, which was slightly increased by subsequent appointments after the resignation of a few "Anti" members. But in no case has the majority represented the proportion of the declared Suffragist majority in the House of Commons. Our adversaries have written through the Chairman of the "National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage" to protest that "surely it is unthinkable that this question should be dealt with, in the absence of the best of our manhood abroad, by an overworked and depleted Parliament, which possesses no mandate on the question, and has itself deliberately excluded controversial questions from its deliberations." We join issue on all those pleas. We believe that the presence of "the best of our manhood" would, if anything, strengthen our cause, for the best of our manhood have learnt by experience the inestimable value of women's service during the war. We have never based our claim for justice on that service. In peace as in war we have long realised that women's service is always vital to the very existence of the country. But there is no doubt that women's work for the public interest during the last two-and-a-half years has been a discovery to many thousands besides the ex-Prime Minister, and we may be quite sure that men at the various Fronts appreciate the discovery even more heartily than the rest of us.

Again, we deny that Parliament is now overworked and depleted. Far from being overworked, its occupation is almost gone. The Cabinet and Ministry have absorbed the work, the House of Commons has next to nothing to do, and would gladly welcome any honourable task. Nor is it depleted, for vacancies are at once filled up, and the absence of the "Service member" becomes less frequent, and may possibly be forbidden. As to "mandate," one would have thought that at the last election the question of votes for women can hardly have escaped the earnest consideration of any elector, even though he belonged to the "National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage." Everyone, we should have thought, must have heard some mention of it and formed his opinion. Yet a large majority of the House of Commons were returned pledged in its favour. And as to the exclusion of controversial questions, this Parliament has dealt with many such. Conscription, the resolutions of the Paris Conference, the prolongation of its own existence—what questions could be more controversial? For what could there be less mandate? We are not complaining of the Parliament's action. We recognize the enormous difference that the war has made. Let our adversaries recognize it too.

The Country Ahead of Parliament

If the Speaker's Conference lags behind the House of Commons, equally, we are convinced, does the House of Commons lag behind the country. From every part of the land both the United Suffragists and the National Council for Adult Suffrage are receiving copies of resolutions passed by societies or branches or meetings, urging the Government to take the bold and wise step of including all citizens in the chief right of citizenship. The Labour Party Conference is meeting, as we write, in Manchester. Questions of the highest political and social importance are before it, and the whole country is watching its proceedings with deserved attention. But in all its deliberations there is nothing of greater ultimate value than the Executive's strong resolution for the demand of Adult Suffrage. That men and women alike should possess the surest weapon for political and social progress; that from both sexes and all classes "the stigma of inferiority and incompetence" should be removed—in ultimate value, no proposal made at any Conference could be greater than that.

Mr. Lloyd George's Opportunity

To such resolutions we cannot believe that the present Prime Minister will refuse to listen. He has frequently described himself as having always been a Suffragist. It is not forgotten how he "torpedoed" the Conciliation Bill because its franchise was not broad and democratic enough. Let him, then, take the present opportunity, and make the basis as broad and democratic as he pleases. To please us, he cannot go too far upon those lines, and now is his golden moment. To prove how profoundly we should applaud his action, all our members and readers must assemble in Kingsway Hall on February 10, at 3 o'clock, when the National Council for Adult Suffrage, with which we are affiliated, holds a great meeting upon a vital occasion. As they value the cause for which we stand, we urge them to be there.

Henry W. Nevinson

WOMEN VOTERS IN NORWAY

By Kaja Geelmuyden

It is fifteen years since Norwegian women began to vote as citizens. The first time that a law giving the vote to women was passed in the Storthing, it was only the communal, i.e., the County Council or Municipal vote, that was accorded them; but the right to vote included, not only women who were themselves taxpayers, but also those whose husbands were taxpayers. The passing of this law probably came as a surprise to the majority, because the indifference with which the matter had continually been treated in the national assembly—in spite of all the polite promises made by the "Left" (the Liberal Party)—had long since robbed women of any illusions they might have had with regard to the opinions of politicians as to what was in justice due to them. It is extremely unlikely that the law would have been passed this time, either, had not the measure been supported by a number of Conservatives, some of whom, no doubt, voted from a genuine feeling of justice, while others did so only because they thought it advisable to provide a counter-balance to the Universal Manhood Suffrage Bill which had been brought forward and passed at the same time.

Woman Became a Force

The law was no sooner passed than women began to realise that they had suddenly attained a hitherto undreamed-of importance. Now that women possessed votes, each one had become a force which had to be reckoned with. All parties began to take an affectionate interest in them, and showed a great anxiety to guide them in the right path—in order to obtain for themselves the full benefit of this increase of votes. The Left (Liberals) reminded the women of what they owed to them—the progressive party—which had always befriended their cause. The Right (Conservatives) made many pleasing remarks about the good and gentle influence which women had exerted throughout the ages, and ventured to hope much of their sense of justice—although they had certainly shown themselves very well content to do without it for a considerable length of time. Thus, all parties were united in welcoming "the new element" in public life.

At first, many women were not at all clear as to which was "the right path" for them to choose, but the more independent-minded and clear-sighted among them realised from the first that if they were really going to introduce a new element into public life they must form their own organisations and not join themselves on, like so many tails, to the old political parties, which were already so firmly rooted in man's interests and man's point of view that it would be impossible for the woman's point of view—where it differed from the man's—to make itself apparent. The great majority of women were inexperienced in public affairs; and from sheer force of habit they were more inclined to believe what was told them by their husbands and brothers, and by the greatly venerated family newspaper, than clever women had prophesied that they would be, although some of the latter were universally respected and admired.

Organizing the Woman's Vote

The first attempt to organise the woman's vote was made by the Union for Women's Suffrage at a municipal election in Christiania; and it was successful in so far that two of the best women, who were also the best speakers, were elected as members of the Commune.[*]

But after this the political parties redoubled their efforts to frighten the women back into the party organisations, because, if women were to be elected at all, they preferred those who were without any prominent opinions of their own.

Municipal Vote Not Enough

That the attempt was partially successful is due to the fact that men's organisations are rich, whereas in Norway women always suffer from lack of funds; the few who are well-to-do are usually Conservative, and do not take an interest in any social questions, except perhaps charitable ones. Perhaps, what is felt even more than the lack of money is the absence of a paper of their own. Gina Krog's otherwise very useful paper, *Nylaende*, is too small, and appears too seldom (only twice a month) to exercise a very wide influence. Over and over again women have suffered from the fact that only a very few of their own sex, and these by no means the most capable, have been elected members of the Commune. That they have none the less been able to give voice to their opinions is to be accounted for by the fact that many a man is so far progressive that he likes to hear what a woman has to say, as long as she does not go directly counter to his interests.

It soon became evident that the communal vote, although an honourable, was not a sufficiently powerful possession, because whenever a social reform of any real importance was desired there was always a law in the way which required alteration, and that could not be done without the consent of the Storthing. Take the Poor Law, for instance, which decides that widows with families dependent on them, and people too old to work, shall be condemned to a form of charitable support, which is extremely humiliating because it deprives them of the rights of citizenship. This, and many other laws, women would like to see altered.

From Limited to Full Franchise

It was therefore necessary to continue the struggle for obtaining the political franchise, which was the only one that could give the right kind of power. In 1907 women obtained this to a limited degree, limited, that is, to taxpayers and the wives of taxpayers; and finally, in 1913, we received the full political franchise on the same terms as it is granted to men, i.e., that all women who have attained the age of twenty-five, and are Norwegian citizens, can vote. The only exceptions are lunatics, criminals and paupers.

This further increase of the franchise did not arouse any great opposition, except on the part of a very few persons. Norwegian men have a strong dislike to being regarded as old-fashioned in their opinions. The long years during which they have worked side by side with women in practical life has also contributed much towards accustoming them to seeing women more or less everywhere. Perhaps, in their secret thoughts, they have reasoned thus: "Even if women get the vote, it will be a great many years before they learn to use it effectively, and we shall be dead before then!"

It was comparatively easy to get women to vote for the communal elections, at any rate in the towns, where at least as large a percentage of women as of men recorded their votes. In the country it has been more difficult, for there the women are more interested in their farming than in the affairs of the parish. Here it may be interesting to observe that during the first few years after women had gained the franchise many of those living in country districts refused to use it from religious scruples, believing it to be contrary to Scripture!

No Woman M.P.

It is felt in all quarters to be a disgrace that we have not yet succeeded in electing a single woman as Member of Parliament, although, before we had obtained the full franchise, Fröken Rogstad was elected in 1911 as a substitute,[*] or proxy, and it was doubtless as a concession to the feelings of women that her male colleague vacated his seat for her during fourteen days!

The lack of women representatives in the national assembly appears all the more unreasonable now, when we have just had the autumn gathering of the National Council of Norwegian Women, which was held in the Storthing. The meeting was popularly called "the Woman's Parliament," and the manner in which the proceedings were led by Fru Betsy Kjelsberg[†] aroused the admiration of all.

It would be unjust to end this review of what Norwegian women have not yet achieved by their vote, without also mentioning the many good gifts which the suffrage has brought them. The mere consciousness that women have become citizens with equal rights, who can—in the event of being greatly moved about anything—make use of their vote and "show their claws" (a Norwegian expression)—that of itself has done us much good. Woman has risen in the public estimation and her wages have continued to rise, too, until in some cases they have come very near to the ideal: "Equal work for equal pay."

Women have access to all Government appointments; they can be Ministers—although not one of them has attained that distinction yet; they can be professors at the University—we have had one for several years already, and there are many more in the making; they can be judges, they can be everything in fact, with the sole exception of—clergymen! This seems curious, because, as church-goers, women greatly outnumber men; but perhaps the reason is, as the celebrated American orator, the Rev. Dr. Anna Shaw, said during her visit to Christiania—"There must be a man in the pulpit to tell the women in the pews what they are to do. That's how Government gets lots of its work done for nothing!"

As there is a great lack of clergymen in many places, it is probable that this last barrier will soon fall, too; and when there is a woman in the pulpit, let us hope there will be more men in the pews.

Christiania, December, 1916.

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[*] The Commune is the local government, neither municipal nor County Council, but inclusive of both; it has a voting committee which chooses members of the school board and representatives of the poor law. In Norwegian towns, a so-called Commune is chosen for three years, during which time it possesses the right of administering the finances of the said Commune, whether town or county council. The number of representatives is relative to the population, thus in Christiania there are eighty-four, and they are called the town council. The manner in which they are chosen is as follows: Each of the four political parties has eighty-four numbers on its list, but as the name of a popular representative may be repeated two or three times, it does not often happen that there are as many as eighty-four names on each list. The voter has the right to strike out names and replace them by those already on the list, or by names chosen from the other lists.

[*] Every member of the Storthing has his substitute, just as an actor has his understudy, one who can take his place in case he is ill, or if he should be promoted to be a member of the Government, or for any other reason prevented from fulfilling his duties as a member of Parliament.

[†] Fru Betsy Kjelsberg is our chief woman factory inspector.

UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. Telephone, Holborn 5880

U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

92, Borough Road, S.E.

Secretary, Miss M. R. Cochrane. Tel.: Hop 4172

Owing to the kindness of many friends, we were able to give every grown-up member of the Club ½lb of sugar for Christmas, and to those with children we gave 1lb, so everyone had enough for Christmas Day. Our children had sweets, crackers, and a toy, just to show that Father Christmas had remembered them. Our New Year has begun with fresh zeal; many new members have joined, and our concerts and meetings are in full swing.

On January 17 Lady Grant came to see us. Lady French was also to have come, but was prevented by influenza. We all much enjoyed Lady Grant's visit. She had time for a chat with every member and every baby, and then had tea with us.

Thanks: To Miss Trollope, Mr. Threadgold, and Miss Gladys Richardson for concerts. Also to the following: Mrs. Gunn Dick, 5s.; Miss Dale, 1s.; Miss Young, 2s. for Christmas presents, and 2s. for the Christmas party; Frau Jensen, 10s.; Mrs. White, holly and evergreens; Mrs. Wells, plum pudding, oranges, and clothes; Mrs. Silver, toys. For gifts of sugar: to Miss Brewster, Miss Sharp, Mrs. McCall, Mrs. Silver, Miss M. Royden, Mrs. Whelen, Miss Walford.

Our Christmas Party

Our Christmas Party is on January 27, at the Baptist Chapel, from 4.0—6.30. Miss Walford has very kindly undertaken to do the catering for us, so we know it will be good. We shall be very grateful for any donations towards the Party.

NEXT U.S. MEETING

Friday, February 16: at 8 p.m.

The week following the great Adult Suffrage meeting in the Kingsway Hall (February 10), on which all United Suffragists are asked to concentrate their energies until it is over, it is proposed to hold a meeting in the Small Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand (Temple Station), at 8 p.m. Admission will be free, and it is hoped that members will come and bring their friends, as the political situation will probably have reached an interesting development by that time.

The chief speaker on this occasion will be Mr. H. Baillie Weaver, a Vice-President of the U.S., and well known to a wide circle of advanced social reformers. His subject will be "Women as Comrades."

Miss Evelyn Sharp will take the chair and deal briefly with the Suffrage situation.

ASHFORD U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Mr. John Marsh, 45, Royd's Road, Willsborough, Kent. Organizer: Miss Maude White, Magazine House, Winchelsea, Sussex

P.S.A. meeting, December 17. The church was crowded to hear Mr. John Scurr. His subject, "Practical Brotherhood," appealed to the audience, who listened very attentively. The leader of the P.S.A., Mr. Herbert Lee, announced that he was an adult suffragist, and he has since become a member of the United Suffragists. Mr. Scurr met some of the local members in the evening, and an interesting discussion took place on how to work up interest on the suffrage question at Ashford. Our very good friends the railwaymen promised to hold meetings in their own homes.

Cinema meeting, December 31. This was a brilliant success. Mr. Lansbury and Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck spoke to a large audience. In spite of the fact that two interrupters did their best to break up the meeting, the resolution was passed unanimously. Four new members were made. We were very pleased to welcome Messrs. Riley, Tong, Chancellor, and Harman, of the Trades and Labour Council, on the platform, all of whom became members at the close of the meeting.

Gratefully acknowledged:—Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, £12; Mrs. V. U. Dell, 1s.; Miss Dell, 1s.; Mr. F. Tong, 1s.; Mr. J. Chancellor, 1s.; Mr. H. Harman, 1s.; Mr. Herbert Lee, 6s. (half Mr. Scurr's expenses) and 1s.; Mr. T. Riley, 1s.; Mr. George Lansbury, 10s.

BIRMINGHAM U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Julia Green, 13, Suffolk Street

On December 17 Mr. Steel Maitland, M.P., received a deputation on the subject of Adult Suffrage. Unfortunately, the result of the interview was not known in time for press. Nine societies were represented, most of them being trade organisations.

The first of a series of four lectures on "The International Situation" was given on December 15 by Miss Haly to a very appreciative audience. The lecture was admirable, the speaker showing great knowledge of her subject. Dates and particulars of the remaining lectures may be obtained at the office.

BOLTON U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss S. W. Holden, 7, Hilden Street

At the December monthly meeting Mr. Spencer spoke on "Realism and Idealism in Art." The address was keenly appreciated by all, and came as a bright and welcome interlude. Mrs. Almond presided, and gave a characteristically witty speech. Our Branch was responsible for a successful public meeting held January 13 to advocate Womanhood and Manhood Suffrage—speakers were Councillor Margaret Ashton and G. G. Armstrong, Esq. Other local organisations were represented, and the resolution was passed unanimously. The meeting was well reported in the local press. Subscriptions and donations gratefully received: Miss L. Abbott, 1s.; Mr. J. Darbyshire, 2s. Will members please make known our meeting on February 5?

Subscriptions and donations gratefully acknowledged: Mrs. Butterworth, 5s.; Miss Collinge, 1s.; Miss Green, 2s.; Miss M. Martin, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Spencer, 2s. 6d.; Miss Whitehead, 2s.

GLASGOW U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Macaulay, 44, Albert Drive, Crosshill

On December 9, Miss T. M. Pagan, of Edinburgh, very kindly came over to lecture to us, and took as her subject Ibsen's play, "The Master Builder." Miss Rose took the Chair, and spoke of Ibsen's belief in women, reading extracts from his writings to support the view that Ibsen could be claimed as a supporter of women's enfranchisement. Miss Pagan's lecture was most interesting and inspiring; and it was a pity more G.U.S. members did not turn out to welcome her. We make a strong appeal to all G.U.S. members to rally to the support of their society, for it is increasingly difficult for the few members who take an active part to manage the work by themselves.

HAMPSTEAD AND GOLDER'S GREEN U.S.

Hon. Secretaries: Miss Daisy Solomon, 64, Pattison Road, N.W.; Miss Dorothy Pethick, 39, Meadway Court, Golder's Green, N.W.

We regret that the following names were omitted from the list of kind contributors to the provision stall:—Miss Taylor, Miss Todhunter, Miss Tonge, Miss Thomson. To these our best thanks are due. We are working hard for the Kingsway Hall Meeting on February 10. Will members and friends send in at once offers of help in distributing handbills, selling tickets, &c., as this branch is entirely responsible for the Hampstead and Golder's Green district. Mrs. Brewster is already working energetically to make the meeting known locally. Will others please follow her example?

KENSINGTON U.S.

Hon. Sec., Miss Postlethwaite, 47a, Earl's Court Road, W. Telephone: 926 Western

Will those members who were unable to come to the tea last Thursday afternoon, when plans were discussed for advertising the meeting on Feb. 10th, please let us know in what way they will help? There are still many bills to distribute and tickets to be sold. Miss Ward and Miss Yarwood have sold a record number of papers this month, many of which have been purchased by soldiers. Thanks are due to Mrs. Achenhausen for her subscription of 9s. towards rent of shop; also to Mrs. Mayatt for 2s. donation, and to Mrs. Nesbitt for Jumble Sale clothes.

LETCHWORTH U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Ruth Pym, 2, Meadow Way Green

A meeting in favour of Adult Suffrage was held on December 4 in conjunction with the Women's International League, the W.S.P.U., the Trades Labour Council, the National Federation of Women Workers, and the I.L.P. Miss Courtney, Secretary of the National League for Adult Suffrage, gave an interesting speech in support of the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. F. Osborn, and passed unanimously. The chair was taken by Mr. Kensitt, of the Trades and Labour Council. A collection was taken, and VOTES FOR WOMEN sold well.

The local society hopes to be represented at the U.S. annual council Meeting on January 20.

LIVERPOOL U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Isabel Buxton, 111, Queen's Road

Members are reminded that by No. 4, local bye-laws, matter to be discussed at the annual general meeting must be lodged with the secretary on or before March 1. It is hoped that many suggestions for the promotion of our work will be forthcoming. We do so want to be more active during the coming year than we have been of late. Nominations for the new vice-president must be in by the above date.

MANCHESTER U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Hope Hampson, Onward Buildings, 207, Deansgate

A special general meeting of the Branch was held on Jan. 19 to instruct our delegate to the Council meeting in London on Jan. 20

A special effort is being made to have "Votes" well to the fore at all the Labour Party meetings at their annual conference.

The efforts towards joint action of the non-party local suffrage societies seem destined to result in some effective work.

Members are reminded that their annual subscriptions are now due.

PORTSMOUTH U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss O'Shea, The Cottage, Cosham, Hants.

The first public meeting of the Portsmouth United Suffragists was an unqualified success. It had been arranged in conjunction with the Portsmouth Trades and Labour Council, and the resolution demanding a Government measure dealing with the franchise deadlock on the basis of a vote for every man and woman, was passed unanimously by a good and representative audience. The meeting was supported by the Workers' Suffrage Federation, the Independent Labour Party, and the East Southsea Women's Co-operative Guild.

Miss Sharp, who spoke to the resolution on behalf of the United Suffragists, pointed out how the war conditions had produced an entirely new suffrage situation. This situation the United Suffragists had foreseen, and in order to meet it, and to be prepared for the political issues it raised, had decided that the time was ripe for women suffragists to join in the demand for a solution of the present deadlock by a Government measure for adult suffrage. Mr. Lansbury, speaking on behalf of the National Council for Adult Suffrage, supported the resolution and made a stirring appeal, especially to the men present to use all their political power to carry it into effect. Mr. Roberts, Chairman of the Trades and Labour Council, took the Chair, and was supported by delegates from the co-operating organisations.

"How refreshing and inspiring to have a suffrage meeting again," was the general comment of appreciation.

HENDON WOMEN'S FRANCHISE SOCIETY (Affiliated to United Suffragists)

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. McCabe, 49, Bridge Lane, Hendon, N.W.

A business meeting of members was held early in the month. An afternoon meeting was held on January 17 at Mrs. Kuttner's, 93, Corringham Road, when Miss Turner read a paper on "The Tradeswoman in War-Time." This meeting was well attended; a good discussion followed the paper. The war savings among the members are mounting up week by week, and in addition to this they have "adopted" three prisoners of war. Most of the members also subscribe to the local day nursery in Addison Way, instituted by the Women's Local Government Society, and take a keen interest in its working. A meeting has been arranged for the early part of February at which Miss Neilans will speak, and the Society is co-operating with the United Suffragists in a local demonstration at the end of the month.

CHRISTMAS SALE

The following is a detailed list of the proceeds of the various stalls at the U.S. Christmas Sale, held on December 2, in aid of their Women's Club:—

Provisions (Hampstead and Golder's Green U.S.) ...	£24	10	0
Refreshments	21	5	0
Embroidery	14	12	5
Toys	12	16	0
Kensington U.S.	11	0	2
Oriental goods	10	7	1¼
General	7	7	0
Children's clothes	6	14	7½
Books	6	5	0
Sweets	4	13	6
U.S. Club	4	7	2½
Parcels	1	1	0
VOTES FOR WOMEN		10	9
Side shows	3	5	0
Entrance	6	5	2
	£135	0	11¼

The following were not included in last month's list of those to whom thanks are due for gifts and help at the sale:—Miss Ballard, Miss Clephane, Lady Cowdray, Miss E. and N. Du Val, Miss J. Green, Mrs. Gristwood, Miss Henderson, Mrs. and Miss McCall, Miss Eva Moore, Mrs. Murray, Miss Sloane, Miss Walton.

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COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

LIGHT SENTENCES Summarily Convicted	HEAVY SENTENCES Committed for Trial
The *Staffordshire and Worcestershire Herald* (January 6) reports case of a youth, aged 17, charged before Mr. W. W. Doughty and others at the Tipton Police Court, with a common assault on a telegraph girl aged 14.	The *Times* (January 10) reports case of five youths—aged 18, 17, 15, 16, and 13—charged before Mr. Wilberforce at Old Street Police Court with housebreaking.
Sentence: *Fined 40s.*	*Committed for trial.*
Assault on Young Woman	**Firing a Rick**
The *Derbyshire Times* (January 6) reports case of a cooper charged before Mr. H. St. John Raikes at Derbyshire Quarter Sessions with an attempted rape on a young married woman. She was thrown down and violently ill-used.	The *Times* (January 13) reports case of a man charged before Judge Rowlatt at the Bucks Assizes with firing a rick of wheat.
Sentence: *Eighteen months' hard labour.*	Sentence: *Five years' penal servitude.*
Cruelty to a Cat	**Stealing 6¾d.**
The *South Wales Echo* (January 9) reports case of a coaltrimmer summoned before the Cardiff Stipendiary for cruelly ill-treating a cat which he had caught in a snare. The snare was then placed to catch a dog.	The *Glasgow Herald* (January 9) reports case of a man charged in the police court with stealing a purse containing 6¾d. from a woman on a tramcar. There were previous convictions.
Sentence: *Fined £3.*	Sentence: *Six months' hard labour.*

The first comparison in the above table illustrates the care with which the law protects property when it is threatened by boys even so young as 13 and 15, but neglects to protect the person of a little girl when assailed by a lad of 17. In the latter case the Bench is reported to have remarked on fining the youth that "young girls must be protected." We agree. But why, if that is so, was not this offender committed for trial instead of being left free to molest other girls?

"Public Danger"

When passing the severe sentence of five years' penal servitude on the man who set fire to a rick of wheat, Mr. Justice Rowlatt said that at this moment arson ranked next to murder in its seriousness and public danger. We wish to believe that the judge was thinking of the danger to life and to the food supply, and not to the farmer's property; but the disproportion between the sentence given here and that given to the man who committed an offence on a woman described by the Chairman as "gross, violent, and brutal," invites comment. In the latter case, the prisoner was said to be "a pest to society and a danger to himself," which no one could deny. Yet it is inconceivable, in view of what takes place in our Courts almost daily, that for injuring a young woman a sentence of five years' should be given!

FOX OR PEOPLE'S FOOD?

We welcome the publication in the *Daily News* (January 10) of a comparison of punishments, showing how much more importance is attached to the protection of the pleasures of the rich than to safeguarding the food of the people. In the one case, at Stratford Police Court (a summary conviction), two corn merchants were fined 15s. each for putting arsenic in baking powder. In the other, a farmer and a carter were fined £3 and £1 respectively at Andover Sessions for poisoning a fox. "Comment," adds the *Daily News*, "is needless."

STAND UP FOR THE SOLDIER'S WIFE!

According to reports in the Press, it was announced in the course of a prosecution before the Birmingham Bench, on January 15, that the police had received instructions to report to the military cases of drunkenness by soldiers' wives. The intention, continues the report, is to hold a special enquiry by the military authorities, "who will deal with all such cases on their merits, quite apart from any measures taken by the civil authority."

Does the Soldier Know?

Our readers will remember that, in spite of the outcry raised by suffragists and others, the joint memorandum issued by the Home Office and the War Office in December, 1914, which virtually placed the soldier's wife under police supervision, with a chance of finally losing her separation allowance, was never withdrawn. Apparently, the powers then taken are to be revived and reinforced now by this fresh action on the part of the War Office, which adopts the still more serious precedent of removing the soldier's wife from civil to military jurisdiction.

We recognise to the full the evils of drunkenness, whether in men or women. We deplore heartily that society should be so constituted at present as to offer thousands of anxious, mentally-strained soldiers' wives no better place to go to for relaxation and companionship than the public house, in which every encouragement is given to seek forgetfulness in intoxication. It was to meet this want that clubs like the U.S. Women's Club at Southwark have been established; and we wish there were many more of them.

Her Rightful Earnings

But, as long as no attempt is made to stop at its source the money that is earned by the man who drinks, even though he refuses to give a penny of it to his wife and children, we strongly deprecate such action being taken with regard to the separation allowance of the soldier's wife, which is her rightful share of her husband's income, and not, as it sometimes appears to be thought, a charitable dole from the War Office.

If as much care were taken to provide soldiers' wives with clubs as is taken to provide soldiers with canteens, there would be far fewer cases of drunkenness among these women.

Further, there may be some drastic steps that can be taken with safety and justice in a community where women have a voice in government, which cannot be taken without grave risk of tyranny and injustice where women have no such safeguard. We regard this new threat on the part of the authorities as a fresh infringement of women's liberties, as a consequence of which any innocent woman might be deprived through a mistake—malice apart—of her and her husband's rightful earnings.

The "Daily News" Speaks Out

We cannot do better than reproduce here the comment which appeared in the *Daily News* of January 16:—

"The War Office is only asking for trouble if it proposes gratuitous interference with people with whom it has no concern. When a soldier enlists—or is deemed to have enlisted—he does not bring his wife and children under War Office authority, and if a soldier's wife commits a civil offence she comes under the jurisdiction of the police and the magistrate, not of Lord Derby.

"Drunkenness among women is a grave evil, and there is some reason to fear it is increasing. That is an argument for more rigorous restrictions on the supply of liquor, and, it may be, for more severe punishment of offenders. But it is no argument at all for any kind of intervention on the part of the War Office. Presumably the proposal is to withhold the separation allowance. That allowance is part of the country's contract with the soldier, and it is not the Army Council's business to decide how it shall or shall not be spent. That it should be spent in drink is deplorable, but even that raises issues that lie entirely outside the War Office's range. Surely the reception given to the unfortunate "police surveillance" order early in the war was sufficient warning against trying to distinguish the soldier's wife from anyone else's wife, and subject her to special and invidious treatment."

"MIGHT IS RIGHT"

Mr. Ben Webster disagrees

An admirable letter, signed by Mr. Ben Webster (Vice-President of the United Suffragists), appeared in the *Referee* on December 17, in answer to one by Mr. A. E. Duncan, in which the writer had put forward the theory that "Might is Right," as a reason for denying political power to women.

"If," writes Mr. Ben Webster, "we follow his suggestion to a logical conclusion, every man who through age or physical disability is unable to pass the military doctor should be deprived of his rights of citizenship.

"Would it not be more seemly to look into the justice of women's demand for the vote?

"Why the laws that women might help to get passed should be such as require the use of force to carry them out is, of course, so strange a proposition that it does not seem worth consideration."

WHAT THE COUNTRY THINKS

Widespread Wish to Get the Woman Suffrage Question Settled—Dissatisfaction at Alleged Exclusion from Report of Speaker's Conference

That there is a widespread wish to get the Woman Suffrage question settled before the end of the war is evident from the resolutions that are being passed all over the country (nearly always in favour of adult suffrage or at least a wide measure of enfranchisement), and from the disappointment expressed in many newspapers over the omission of all mention of women from the forecasts that first prepared in the Press of the probable Report that will be submitted to Parliament by the Speaker's Conference upon the reassembling of Parliament, which takes place some ten days after this issue appears. If this omission is incorrect, the error will have served a useful purpose in producing an expression of public opinion almost entirely favourable to the claims of women.

RESOLUTIONS

We give below specimens of the kind of resolutions that are being passed all over the country at this time. The adult suffrage demand has been widely urged by Labour and Suffrage organizations; 156 of such resolutions were submitted to the Speaker's Conference by the N.C.A.S. at the beginning of January.

Bolton Suffragists

The following resolution was moved by Mr. G. Armstrong, Northern Editor of the *Daily News*, seconded by Councillor Margaret Ashton, supported by Councillor Potter, and passed unanimously at a joint Suffrage meeting in Bolton, on January 13, which the Bolton U.S. had organized:—

"That this meeting declares its conviction that for the satisfactory settlement of problems of reconstruction after the war it is necessary that the Parliament which deals with such matters shall be elected by the votes of the whole adult population, and that for this purpose it is urgent that the franchise be widened immediately so as to extend the right to vote to all men and women of 21 years of age on a short residential qualification."

Labour Party Conference

A strong Franchise resolution will be proposed by the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, at their annual Conference, which is being held at Bristol as we go to press. The clauses principally affecting our movement are the following:—

"That this Conference declare that the war has made obsolete all our past system of enfranchisement and registration;

"That the only solution of the difficulties that have arisen is adult suffrage, including women;

"That no election conducted on the present register, or before the above changes have been made, can return a Parliament which represents the nation."

Women's Freedom League

The following resolution was sent to the new Prime Minister:—

"The National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, feeling the necessity of women's counsels in the nation, more especially in the reconstructive work which the Government will have to initiate at the close of the war, urges you, as the head of the Government, immediately to introduce and carry through a Women's Suffrage Bill."

FROM THE PRESS

The Nation (Jan. 20)

The case is urgent, for, as Mr. Asquith has argued, with the whole subject of industrial reconstruction before us, women must be enabled to vote at the next election. . . . If agreement must be purchased at the price of excluding women, we say without hesitation that we should prefer to wait for genuine adult suffrage.

Daily Chronicle (Jan. 17)

There will be great disappointment among men of progressive views that the Committee failed to come to any agreement on the question of women's suffrage. . . . This grievous defect will have to be remedied by a courageous Government.

The Herald (Jan. 20)

If it is true that the Speaker's Conference while dealing in its forthcoming report with many questions of registration and franchise, has failed to come to an agreement on Woman Suffrage, that fact is the gravest possible set-back to the cause of justice and reform.

Westminster Gazette (Jan. 17)

These two questions [Woman Suffrage and Ireland] must be faced if we are to do more than tinker with the register in the present Parliament. The pledges which our public men have given to the women prevent a drastic change in the franchise which does not admit their claim.

Manchester Guardian (Jan. 19)

As to women's suffrage, it is a matter of elementary justice—of a justice which the lessons of the war have brought home as never before to all thoughtful and patriotic people—and no great measure of electoral reform would be tolerable or could be tolerated without it. . . . The Speaker's Committee may—we trust it will not—find it convenient to ignore this issue. Parliament cannot ignore it.

Morning Advertiser (Jan. 18)

The committee has not grappled with either women's suffrage or the question of the over-representation of Ireland at Westminster, and it is not easy to understand to what practical use the other recommendations can be put until some conclusion has been reached on these two troublesome topics.

The Chairman of the N.L.O.W.S., in a letter to the "Times" (Jan. 20)

Even, however, were the state of public opinion as favourable to woman suffrage as Mrs. Fawcett erroneously supposes, surely it is unthinkable that this question should be dealt with, in the absence of the best of our manhood abroad, by an overworked and depleted Parliament, which possesses no mandate on the question, and has itself deliberately excluded controversial questions from its deliberations.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DRAMATIC RECITAL of "Romeo and Juliet," by Miss Clara Reed at the Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford Street, Strand, Sunday, February 25th, at 3.30. Tickets, 2s. and 1s. from the Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE hold Public Meetings at Caxton Hall on Wednesday afternoons at 3 o'clock. Speakers: February 7th, Mrs. Nevinson and Miss M. B. Murray; February 14th, Miss Esther Roper and Mrs. Mustard; February 21st, Mrs. Corner and Miss Abadam; February 28th, Dr. Armstrong Smith (Letchworth Theosophical School) and Mrs. Despard. Admission Free.

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Speakers: **THE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN SIMON, K.C., M.P.; COUNCILLOR MARGARET ASHTON; MISS MARY MACARTHUR, MRS. BARTON, and MR. W. C. ANDERSON, M.P.**

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Printed by Walbrook & Co., Ltd., 14 and 15, Whitefriars Street, London, E.C., for the Proprietors of VOTES FOR WOMEN, and Published by them at 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.